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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

25 October 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL ESTIMATES BOARD

FROM: [REDACTED] 25X1A9a

SUBJECT: Proposals for Handling NIE-51: Possibility of a Change of Regime in Yugoslavia and its Consequent Effects.

1. This Estimate was initiated by G-2, which apparently wishes to prepare the intelligence material needed to determine the courses of action available to the U.S. in the event of such a change. Laudable as this far-sightedness may be, I seriously doubt the value of such an estimate at this time.

2. The contributions to NIE-29/2 indicate no serious threat to the regime at the moment. The two danger spots are: (a) Communist party members who fear the results of Yugoslavia's rapprochement with the West; and (b) the peasants who oppose any Communist regime. Neither of these groups is organized, neither has identifiable leaders. It would therefore be impossible to predict with any preciseness the nature of a successor regime to Tito's and therefore equally impossible to make any meaningful estimates regarding the effects of a change in regime.

3. It might be possible to write a paper which would examine the situation in the event of arbitrarily chosen assumptions. There are four categories of things which might occur. (1) A Satellite attack resulting in the overthrow of Tito. It would be manifestly impossible to estimate what would happen because so much would depend on what action the U.S. took to counter such an attack. (2) Overthrow of Tito by a pro-Cominform regime. Yugoslavia would revert to Satellite status with results so obvious as to scarcely warrant an estimate. (3) Overthrow of Tito by a non-Communist regime. Aside from the unlikelihood of such an event, it would be extremely difficult to estimate its effects. So much would

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depend on the state of US-Soviet relations at the time, the extent of civil disturbances involved in the revolt, who would lead it, etc. (4) A change in leadership of the present anti-Cominform, Communist regime. Again much would depend on unpredictable conditions within Yugoslavia.

4. A last general comment. If this paper is worth doing, there would be as much justification for O/NE's writing a whole series of estimates predicting the consequences of unexpected events, such as: the Assassination of Franco, the Death of Nehru, the Demise of Adenauer or Schumacher, etc. The experience of ORE with the Stalin Succession paper is an excellent example of the nearly insuperable obstacles to production of such estimates.

5. The alternatives are therefore:

1. To produce a paper so full of assumptions and so far from reality as to be of little value;
2. To persuade the IAC to cancel the project as a separate paper and to rest for the moment with NIE-29/2 which will discuss fully the internal and external stability of the Tito regime.

I recommend the second alternative.

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